

**Branch County Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes from November 14, 2017**

Board Members present: Insa, Duane Clover, Diana Lutz and Bing Johnson

Staff present: Kathy Worst and Tyler Tankersley

The meeting was called to order by secretary Insa Raymond at 7:22 p.m.

Diana Lutz made a motion to move the appointment of Bing Johnson as a new director to the first item on the agenda; Seconded by Duane Clover; the motion passed.

Diana Lutz moved to appointment Bing Johnson as a Director to replace Mary Ellen Newton after her resignation; Duane Clover seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Secretary's Report: board minutes for the September 12th regular meeting, the September 26th special meeting and October 12th meeting were reviewed. Diana Lutz moved to approve all of the mentioned board minutes; Duane Clover seconded the motion; minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report and Payment Voucher List for the last month as well as the FY17 Quarterly reports for FY17 yearend were reviewed and discussed. There is currently a bank balance of \$67,196.68, which includes \$48,319.27 in the checking account, \$14,932.92 in the savings account and \$3,944.49 in the checking merchant account. Bills in the amount of \$12,810.07 have been pre-paid and \$16,043.17 still needs to be paid out. Diana Lutz made a motion to approve the bills not prepaid; Duane Clover seconded; the motion passed. Duane Clover made a motion to pay the three nurseries the initial 25% now, with the rest to be paid out in the spring; Diana Lutz seconded; the motion carried. Diana Lutz moved to approve annual dues for MACD to be paid out at \$250 per quarter a total of \$1,000; Duane Clover seconded the motion; the motion carried. Duane Clover made a motion to approve the Treasurers report and to pay the remaining bills; Diana Lutz seconded; the motion passed. Diana Lutz moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, to approve all pre-paid bills totaling \$11,823.61 and to approve payment of all outstanding bills in the amount of \$27,941.91; Duane Clover seconded the motion; treasurer's report was approved and put to file for audit.

New Business

2018 Board Meeting Dates were discussed. Diana Lutz moved to approve the dates as set forth on a list attached; Bing Johnson seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Kathy requested an increase for Sheila beginning October 12, 2017 to \$18.25, which she stated was within the FY18 budget. Diana moved to make the increase; Bing seconded; the motion passed.

Kathy requested a decision from the board choosing between a self-audit or a paid audit for fiscal 2017. She said she could accrue the materials necessary, then have Barry Associates review and complete a letter of compliance. The alternative would be spending thousands on an audit. MACD law allows a self-audit every other year. We completed a full audit for FY16.

Quincy Schools may be interested in doing an outdoor education day and may request additional help with their outdoor center. We will provide assistance, if time allows.

Creative Web Designs our current provider provided a Website redesign quote. After review, Diana moved to accept the quote and move forward; Duane seconded; the motion passed.

MAEAP congratulation letters from the board were discussed as a nice way to reach out to our newly MAEAP verified farms. Mike and Kathy will go ahead and create a base letter template to work from and adapt as the new verifications occur. The board will sign them at each meeting and mail.

The City of Coldwater's Sarah Fronczak suggested a partner project to Kathy planting trees with the Rotary, City, and Boy Scouts. We will wait to see what comes of this one.

Tyler Tankersley presented his letter of resignation as of December first to the board. He will be leaving for a position with Delta Conservation District in the UP. He mentioned how much he had learned and enjoyed his time here. Diana Lutz made a motion to accept his resignation; Duane Clover seconded the motion; the motion carried. The board wished Tyler well in his future.

Bing Johnson moved to begin the process of filling the position; Duane Clover seconded the motion; the motion carried. Kathy was instructed to post the position and begin setting up interviews to fill the position as soon as possible.

A Director Survey for MACD Region 8 still needs to be completed by board members concerning training needs and meetings. Kathy will resend the link to the survey, so they have access to complete this survey.

Kathy requested approval to pursue some possible workshops including a Natural Shoreland Steward Training program and Native plant programs, plus more. She will continue to work on these for the spring and summer.

Old Business

Lakeland School outdoor education day this spring will be held on April 30th, with a rain date of May 14th. We still need to confirm our presenters including some of the staff and directors. The board agreed to do so. The upcoming sale of Lakeland was also discussed and what to do about the loss of the outdoor center. Bing suggested we offer the schools one dollar to take the facility off of their hands. We could then use the site ourselves.

Annual Meeting, Election and Conservation EXPO: Kathy said the topics and speakers are still being worked on, but moving forward. Bing will try to reach out to some Beekeepers for a presentation.

Tree Sale: Tree selections have been ordered and progress in being made to getting the sale moving. Initial payments were approved earlier.

MAEAP tablet progress: We have been told to make a pilot project proposal to MDARD with all equipment financials included. In the proposal Mike and Kathy are working up, MDARD would pay half of the cost of the equipment; we would pay the rest, including wireless connection fees of about \$45 dollars per month. The board decided that the potential increase in MAEAP productivity would set this at a higher priority than the projector scheduled for purchase, if we needed to make a choice. The proposal will be worked up and submitted as soon as all numbers are confirmed.

State of Michigan SUW Tax Issue: Colleen is continuing to work on fixing the new 2016 State of Michigan tax issues. Again these taxes have been paid.

MDNR Landowner Incentive Program: Kathy mentioned the progress on the one HAP enhancement project in Branch County is moving along nicely. There will be 29 acres of warm and cool season enhancements, when completed.

Our Land Judging Day at Shed Farm went very well. We had some great help on site, with 140 students participating. More are expected next year.

Work Day for District Shed: was successfully held on Tuesday, September 26 in the heat wave. It has been re-shingled and painted completed, with the help of John, Duane, Marcus, Tyler Sheila, and Kathy. The shed still needs a bit of work completed around the entrance, but should be basically sound for a few years.

Land Judging FY 2018: Shed Farms, Tekonsha are hosting October 12. Five of the six schools have set a time slot and submitted a student headcount. John, Adam, Sheila and Tyler will be setting up on September 11th. John has asked that we try to get some donations for donuts and cider for the students; possibly asking Gleis.

Kathy and Tyler reported that the MACD Conference went very well. There were some good educational and networking topics. They also mentioned that the District had been given a very special award as the "MAEAP Grant Host of the Year". This could not have happened without the teamwork we are all a part of including our directors and district conservationist.

Southern Michigan Invasive Species Team CISMA Grant: Nothing new.

Video Project: Not quite complete.

Mission Statement: no progress.

Smith Farm: Kathy mentioned that Marcus, Sheila and Tyler using the organic garden piece of our property had managed to produce and donate over 700 pounds of food to the local food pantry.

Projector: none – on hold until a determination is made concerning the MAEAP tablet.

County Commission next steps: Kathy will try to work with the county clerk, treasurer, and commission to see if a millage is something, they will allow us to pursue. She will also try to develop resolution documents, so that the board can approve moving forward with a millage election. She has asked for help; those directors, who wish to be involved, should let her know.

Directors' and Staff Reports

Directors – Diana mentioned that she would once again be in Singapore for a month teaching schoolchildren.

NRCS District Conservationist: Marcus Reynolds – absent

CTAI Specialist: Sheila Wald – see written report – Kathy mentioned there are still issues with Sheila's grant at the NRCS level, but we expect them to be resolved soon. Our upfront funding will come shortly after. At the time, all staff will be receiving their remaining fringe funds from FY17.

MWSP / MAEAP Technician: Mike Censke – see written report

Farm Bill Biologist: Tyler Tankersley – see written report – he mentioned the work he has been trying to complete. CRP has reached its cap. The drill has been busy. Other things have been moving forward.

Conservation District Administration: Kathy Worst – present – requesting time off in January – approved.

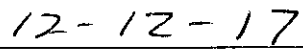
Public Comments: none

Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Insa Raymond, secretary.



Signature



Date